

Press Release

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Release Date: Immediately

Announcing the NAMI Basics Education Program

Contact: Melanie Martin-Dent at 560-6371 or Suzie Stokes at 563-5104

The Montana State chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in partnership with the Montana Children's Mental Health Bureau and Family Support Network will be sponsoring the NAMI Basics Education Program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness. This 6 week series of classes will held in April and May in Butte, at the Health Department, 25 Front St. on Thursdays beginning April 23. The class will meet from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. and there is no charge for the class. This training has been approved for foster parents' education hours by DFS, and a certificate will be presented at the end of the course to document participation.

The course will cover information about ADHD, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders, Schizophrenia and Substance Abuse Disorders; coping skills such as handling crisis and relapse; basic information about medication use in the treatment of mental illness in children; listening and communication techniques; problem solving skills; and an overview of the mental health and school systems' roles in treating children with mental illness.

The curriculum was written by an experienced family member who is also a mental health professional. The course will be taught by volunteers who are parents or other caregivers of individuals who developed mental illness as children. These volunteers have completed the NAMI Basics teacher training and have been certified to

teach the course. The co-teachers for this class will be Melanie Martin-Dent, Susie Stokes and Janet Emerick Foster.

This course was successfully offered in Anaconda in January and February, with seven people completing the class. Those who were interested but unable to attend that session are encouraged to call and sign up for this one.

“This course is a wonderful experience! I’ve been trying to find help for my family members for many years, and there are so many things I never knew” says Susie. “It balances education and skill training with emotional support, self-care and empowerment. We hope parents, foster parents, grand parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents with mental illness will take advantage of this unique opportunity.”

For more information or to register for this class, please call Susie at 563-5104 or Melanie at 560-6371.